

7-014 1966 LEAVING IRELAND
Letter

Greenways
Knockholt
near Sevenoaks
Kent

Telephone :
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Dear Mimi and Finn !

We've only been over here a few weeks but already Dublin seems far away in time and space.

I wonder how you got on down in Sligo this summer. I was sorry not to see you, Mimi, before we left. We felt awful seeing a glimpse of Finn on the quayside at the North Wall. It was one of our last memories of "home". Lovely to feel that someone cared about us.

Some how or other, we're sure to be over in Dublin again in the not too distant future - and I expect you'll be in London at odd times. If all goes well (see below) we'll be able to put you up here.

You see we went flat hunting - very hopefully - in Hampstead last Friday. Soon found there isn't a chance of a place. Even the smallest is £10 and what we really want is about £25 a week. Then Venni had the bright idea of looking under the "situations vacant" column and found a job advertised by the British Council of Churches - they want a caretaking couple to look after the monster mansion (built 1932 neo-Gothic - Finn would have a fit - we did). Well, we've talked to the Rev. concerned on the phone and he says there's a strong possibility we'll be given the job. We don't know what the pay is but the accommodation (five bathrooms) is enough in itself and the place is on the edge of Hampstead Heath about a mile from the Montessori training college.

Now this is where you come in. Any previous experience? Venni was quick enough to mumble about us 'looking after' this country house in the West of Ireland. She didn't have to elaborate at all but the Council would like to have a reference. Could you stretch your imaginations and think of us down in Sligo last year caretaking? We are nearly going out of our minds getting this fantastic job. A little gentle coaxing up by you would clinch it. We've got the Council ringing through to Mrs. Simms (Archbishop's wife) and Victor Bewley, for character references and we just need one about previous experience - and we're there, next week.

Also in the pipeline is a job for me as assistant secretary of the National Council for Civil Liberties, which will be handy and congenial. We've had some temporary work editing the manuscript for Richard Hauser's next book and, of course, have had no rent to pay living in the caravan down here. I was at a huge Gypsy funeral the other day at which the body laid fully exposed in an open coffin and was kissed by all the numerous relatives. It was strange and harrowing - one woman ~~fainted~~ fainted. another threw a